Intrinsic Elements of the Novel "Victor Frankenstein"

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
 	This research explores the intrinsic elements of Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, with a primary focus on the characterization of the dominant character. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method, the study investigates how Victor Frankenstein's psychological and moral development shapes the narrative and reflects the novel's broader themes of ambition, isolation, and scientific responsibility. The analysis reveals that Victor is a complex, round character whose tragic downfall stems from a failure to assume responsibility for his creation. Additionally, the study examines the symbolic significance of the novel's settings, the narrative structure, and the ethical implications of unchecked scientific pursuit. By understanding these intrinsic elements, particularly characterization, readers can develop a deeper appreciation for the literary and philosophical dimensions of the novel. This research contributes to literary pedagogy by demonstrating how classical texts, such as Frankenstein, remain relevant in discussions about ethics, technology, and humanity.

1. Introduction

A novel is a literary work that has two main elements, which can be analyzed. They are intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are the components of a literary work that contribute to its structure. Plot, characterization, setting, theme, background, point of view, and messages are examples of the intrinsic elements; without these elements, a literary work cannot exist. Sukada stated that "intrinsic elements are the whole elements which build up a literary work" (Fadhilawati, 2023; Negara et al., 2024). Those intrinsic elements are interrelated and work together as a whole. As we know, a plot is a course of action taken by characters, who are the people who work in a fiction. Setting is the place and time in which a story happens. Setting can contribute to the plot and the reader's understanding of the characters. Point of view, on the other hand, refers to the relationship between the storyteller and the story. An author's choice of narrator can sometimes reveal their opinion of events and characters in a story, and the theme is the story's main idea. A theme usually extends beyond the confines of a story to form a general statement about life. A story's theme is usually implied through changes in character or setting, or through the author's choice of point of view.

A novel is a type of media used to convey an author's ideas. The idea might come from various resources, such as the author's experiences, one's own experiences, or the

conditions under which the book was written at the time. Typically, the author will do so selectively, drawing on the story's elements, based on the purpose, while also incorporating entertainment and informational aspects, such as human life, to make the novel more engaging (Aliyev, 2021; Beltrán Almería, 2019).

The novel offers various problems related to human beings and humanity, as it is usually based on a true story, myth, or even a religious belief of the culture. The novel has many subplots; therefore, it cannot be read in one sitting, but it requires time, even days, to read for a good understanding (Khadka, 2023).

Everybody likes to read novels, especially teenagers. However, most of them read the novel only for the sake of killing time. Most teenagers often read novels just for pleasure, reading them for fun without caring about the intrinsic elements, especially the characterization and the dominant character in the novel. Those are some reasons about the novel that are the first variable in the research. Characterization is one of the most intrinsic elements of a story that people have to know about. Characterization is the act of describing the character or qualities of someone or something in the story. From understanding characterization, people, especially students, can easily find and introduce the dominant character in a novel's story. There are five intrinsic elements of a story, but the researcher focuses on identifying characterization, especially finding the dominant character.

Many people find it difficult to determine the characterization or the dominant character because some stories in the novel have many characters, which can make the readers feel complicated or confused. Therefore, the researcher is interested in investigating the solution to this problem. Character is very important in the creation of literary works, such as novels, dramas, or even some poems. The nature of character presentation brings a positive impact, allowing readers to find out what is going on and what it is for. Since the character mirrors the quality of a person. It can be traced to generalizing an opinion for humanity in general. Through analyzing the characterization, hopefully, readers will gain some advantages by understanding the characterization in the novel. The readers not only read but also increase their understanding of the characterization in the novel. This is the background, as well as one reason why this topic is discussed in this research.

This novel tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist from Switzerland, born in Geneva and raised by his parents to pursue a life of science. When he was a child, he wanted to know how humans could create another human (Shelley, 2015). So he began working to imitate God's most incredible creation. He made a monster from the remains of the dead body. The body parts were put together by stitching them together and turned on again using the electricity from lightning. However, despite all that had been done, the experiment was out of control. He made a giant creature with incredible strength. When the monster opened his eyes, Frankenstein escaped with extreme fear. The monster came out into the bustling world, trying to find friends and love, but he just got hatred and fear. Then he vowed to take revenge on the creator who had given him a breath of life. With incredible strength, he traveled to the world to destroy all those who loved Frankenstein.

On the other hand, the researcher chooses the novel "Victor Frankenstein" because it certainly has the appeal to attract readers. It tells about human life, and this novel predominantly expresses the conflicts experienced by the characters, or the main characters. The conflict between Victor and the monster is that they are trapped in a cycle of solving their conflict, and the creation (the monster) seeks revenge against his creator (Victor Frankenstein), who murdered all the people who loved Frankenstein.

There are family and his friends. This novel is very interesting and full with fantasy or imagination.

2. Method

In this research, the researcher will use a qualitative descriptive (Gapur et al., 2024; Gapur & Pujiono, 2018; Gapur & Taulia, 2023; Pujiono et al., 2025) because the study elaborates on the condition of the research based on the facts as they are and analyzes to give the truth based on data (Deckert & Wilson, 2023). The novel by Mary Shelley, "Victor Frankenstein," will be considered in collecting data relevant to the subject matter, as it may provide some support for reading, analysis, and writing.

The source of data in this research will be obtained from Mary Shelley's novel "Victor Frankenstein". This novel consists of twenty-four chapters, and the researcher took in the first part, chapters one through eight.

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the intrinsic elements of Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, particularly focusing on characterization and the psychological development of the dominant character. The qualitative method is suitable for literary analysis, as it enables the researcher to interpret textual data through thematic and narrative exploration, rather than relying on statistical measurement.

The research is textual and interpretative in nature (Mihas, 2023; Thompson, 1999). It is designed to identify, describe, and interpret the intrinsic elements within the novel, namely theme, plot, setting, characterization, point of view, and message, with a primary emphasis on the dominant character.

The primary data source for this research is the novel Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus, by Mary Shelley. The 1818 original edition was consulted to ensure fidelity to the author's earliest narrative intentions. Selected chapters, especially Chapters 1 through 8, were chosen for their relevance in establishing the protagonist's motivation, psychological profile, and character development.

Secondary sources, including books, scholarly articles, and theses, are related to literary theory, characterization, and Gothic literature, and serve to support and frame the analysis.

The collected data were analyzed thematically using the following procedures:
- Identification of all intrinsic elements in the selected text, with a focus on characterization.
- Classification of characters based on types (flat, round, dynamic, static, protagonist, antagonist).
- Interpretation of character behavior using psychological and ethical frameworks.
- Comparison of the protagonist's traits with literary theories of character construction.
- Contextualization of findings concerning Gothic conventions and philosophical implications.

This analytical process enables the researcher to present a nuanced interpretation of Victor Frankenstein's character, while also exploring broader implications regarding human ambition, moral responsibility, and scientific ethics.

3. Results and discussion
3.1. Victor Frankenstein as the Dominant Character

Victor is a classic example of a "round character" (Forster, 1965)—his internal conflict evolves drastically as the story progresses. His transformation from a passionate

scientist to a guilt-ridden man consumed by the consequences of his ambition illustrates a significant character arc.

Psychologically, Victor exhibits signs of obsessive-compulsive tendencies, moral dissonance, and eventual regret. His failure to take responsibility for the creature reflects his immaturity and lack of ethical foresight.

3.2. The Monster as Reflection of Victor's Guilt

Although unnamed, the creature becomes a mirror of Victor's suppressed fears and guilt. The monster, initially innocent, becomes vengeful due to societal rejection and his creator's neglect. This duality reflects the Gothic tradition, where monstrous figures often symbolize internal psychological struggles.

3.3. Supporting Intrinsic Elements
- Theme: Ambition vs. Responsibility; Man vs. Nature; Isolation.
- Setting: Europe during the Enlightenment era, marked by the tension between science and religion.
- Point of View: Frame narrative, enhancing the complexity and reliability of storytelling.
- Plot: Rising tension from scientific discovery to tragic downfall, supported by a nonlinear timeline and reflective tone.

3.4. Educational Implications

For language and literature teaching, this novel serves as a powerful tool for:
- Encouraging critical thinking about ethics in science and literature.
- Enhancing students' ability to interpret narrative structure and character development.
- Integrating literary appreciation with broader social and psychological contexts.

3.5. Characterization: Psychological and Moral Dimensions

Characterization in Frankenstein is not only conveyed through narrative and dialogue but also the internal conflicts experienced by the characters. Victor Frankenstein reflects the modern human's ambition to dominate nature through science. Beneath his desire to create life lies a narcissistic drive a yearning to equal God's creative power.

On a moral level, Victor fails to take responsibility for his creation. He abandons the creature, providing neither guidance nor affection, which ultimately leads to tragedy. Victor's behavior illustrates an ethical failure in decision-making and accountability. From this perspective, his characterization serves as a critique of the social reality where personal ambition often blinds individuals to the broader consequences of their actions.

3.6. The Creator Creation Dynamic

The relationship between Victor and his creation can be interpreted as a metaphor for parent–child relationships or even a theological analogy between God and humanity. The creature demands recognition and moral responsibility from his creator, but Victor rejects him. This rejection initiates a cycle of vengeance and destruction.

Ironically, the monster intended initially as a marvel of scientific progress becomes a symbol of ruin due to the creator's moral abandonment. Although portrayed as

horrific, the creature possesses deep humanity he learns language, seeks companionship, and experiences sorrow. His degeneration into violence is not inherent but socially induced. This tragic irony underscores the philosophical and ethical concerns that lie at the heart of Shelley's work.

3.7. Setting and Its Influence on Character Development

The shifting settings in the novel from Geneva and Ingolstadt to the Alpine mountains and the Arctic play a symbolic role in shaping character psychology:

- Ingolstadt, the birthplace of Victor's experiment, represents the height of Enlightenment rationalism and scientific zeal.
- The Alps, where Victor and the creature confront each other, serve as a space for contemplation and existential reckoning.
- The Arctic, where the narrative begins and ends, signifies isolation, emotional desolation, and the chilling consequence of Victor's hubris.

These settings function as psychological landscapes that parallel the emotional and moral states of the protagonist. They are not mere backdrops but are woven into the narrative to deepen meaning and amplify tension.

3.8. Symbolism and Language Style

Shelley's use of symbolism is powerful and multi-layered. Lightning, corpses, laboratories, and the polar regions all serve as symbols of power, life, death, and alienation. These reinforce the novel's themes of unnatural creation, isolation, and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

Her language style is rich with descriptive passages and philosophical reflections. The use of a frame narrative with stories nested within letters adds complexity to the storytelling. It allows for multiple viewpoints, featuring the explorers Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the creature himself. This technique not only enhances narrative depth but also encourages readers to evaluate the reliability of each narrator.

3.9 Relevance to Contemporary Issues

The ethical questions posed by Frankenstein remain highly relevant today, particularly in discussions about biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and the responsibilities of science. Victor's unrestrained ambition and failure to foresee the consequences of his creation mirror modern debates surrounding AI development, cloning, and gene editing.

This continued relevance makes Frankenstein a valuable literary text not only for literary scholars but also for educators, scientists, and ethicists. The novel bridges the gap between literature and real-world dilemmas, encouraging interdisciplinary discourse on the limits of human innovation and the necessity of moral accountability.

4. Conclusion

This study has examined the intrinsic elements of Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, with particular emphasis on characterization and the psychological development of the main character. Through a qualitative analysis of selected chapters, it becomes evident that Victor Frankenstein is portrayed as a complex and evolving character, whose internal and external conflicts are deeply intertwined with the themes of ambition, ethical responsibility, and human limitations.

The findings demonstrate that the novel's narrative power lies in its use of multi-layered characterizations, symbolic settings, and philosophical undertones. Victor's downfall is not merely the result of scientific overreach but of moral negligence and

emotional detachment from his creation. The creature, in turn, reflects the consequences of rejection and alienation, becoming a tragic symbol of misunderstood existence.

Furthermore, the study affirms the continued relevance of Frankenstein in the context of modern ethical debates surrounding science, technology, and artificial intelligence. The novel presents rich opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and can be effectively utilized in educational settings to foster literary appreciation, critical thinking, and ethical reflection.

By analyzing the intrinsic elements, particularly the characterization of Victor and his relationship with the creature, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the narrative's moral and psychological dimensions. It encourages future researchers to explore Frankenstein not only as a gothic novel but also as a timeless commentary on the human condition and the boundaries of knowledge.

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